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20
ELMERICK:

O R,

Justice Triumphant.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE ROYAL

I N

DRURY-LANE.

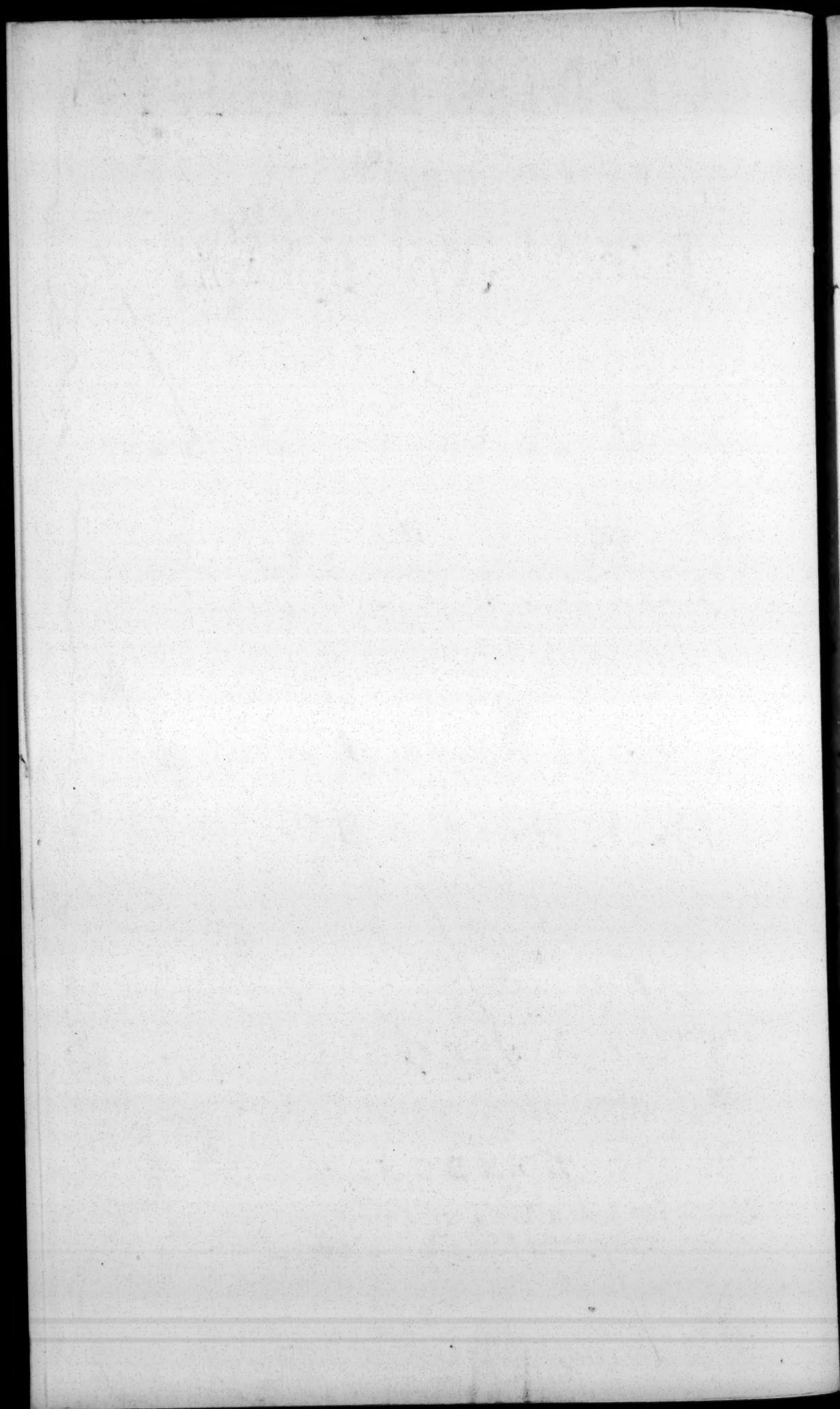
By Mr. LILLO.



LONDON:

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Poultry near *Cheapside*. MDCCXL.

20*



TO HIS
ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCE
OF
WALES

S I R,
THE Author of these Scenes
always propos'd to do him-
self the Honour of addressing
10 A 2 them

DEDICATION.

them to the Prince of *Wales* :
And when he perceiv'd himself
just quitting the Stage of this
Life, and retiring beyond the
Reach of the Smiles or Frowns
of Princes ; his Veneration even
then of your Royal Highness's
exalted and most amiable Quali-
ties was so intense and strong,
that he solemnly enjoin'd me to
perform this Duty for him. For
as he was always remarkably de-
voted to the Cause of Liberty and
Justice, (for the Advancement of
which the following Piece was
written) he thought it would be
a kind of Injury, not to conse-
crate it to the most illustrious
Patron of Justice, Heroick Vir-
tue,

DEDICATION.

tue, and the Rights of Mankind. Your Royal Highness's great Condescension in permitting me to execute the Will of my departed Friend, and in patronizing his Orphan Play, is a Circumstance that is very glorious to him, and gives a Sanction to his Fame.

All true *Englishmen* in general, as well as the Friends of Mr. *Lillo* in particular, have great Reason to congratulate one another on the Protection which your Royal Highness was graciously pleas'd to afford this Piece during the Performance of it. For to see the Heir Apparent of these Kingdoms so generously countenancing a

A 3 Tragedy,

DEDICATION.

Tragedy, in which the Character of a Righteous King, who founds all his Glory on the Liberty and Happiness of his Subjects, is drawn in such strong and lively Colours, must give a very sensible Pleasure to the whole Nation : It serves to keep alive the Hopes which the Publick has long since conceiv'd, and is an undoubted Pledge, of many future Blessings from your auspicious Influence.

Your Elegancy of Taste, and Illustrious Virtues render you the most generous Protector and the noblest Theme of all who cultivate the politer Arts ; as the continual Overflowings of
your

DEDICATION.

your Bounty towards all Objects of Distress daily endear you to every Heart that has any Feelings of Humanity: This your Princely Heavenly Disposition is universally felt and acknowledged, and consider'd with all its Circumstances without a Parallel.

That your Royal Highness may long continue the Munificent Encourager of Arts and Letters, an Example to Princes of public Spiritedness, Humanity, and Condescension, is the ardent Wish of every honest *Briton*: For notwithstanding all our Divisions, the Voice of the whole Nation is unanimous in

A 4 praying

DEDICATION.

praying for your Life, Honour,
and Prosperity : And this we
should do from Motives of In-
terest and Self-love, were we not
impell'd to it by Gratitude and
Duty.

I am,

S I R,

Your Royal Highness's

Most Devoted

Humble Servant

JOHN GRAY.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. QUIN.

NO labour'd Scenes to Night adorn our Stage,
Lillo's plain Sense wou'd here the Heart engage.
He knew no Art, no Rule; but warmly thought
From Passion's Force, and as he felt he wrote.
His Barnwell once no Critick's Test cou'd bear,
Yet from each Eye still draws the natural Tear.
With generous Candour bear his latest Strains,
And let kind Pity shelter his Remains.
Deprest by Want, afflicted by Disease,
Dying he wrote, and dying wish'd to please.
Oh may that Wish be now humanely paid,
And no harsh Critick vex his gentle Shade.
'Tis yours his unsuported Fame to save

ERRATA.

PAG. 57. lin. 21. read greatness. Pag. 66. a
line 13. add

But if thro' passionate and blind prevention
You do refuse to hear, I had rather die
Than bear the unavailing name of Palatine,
First guardian of the rights of freeborn Hung.
And live a witness to an innovation
So fatal to my country.

Ibid. l. 14. dele

A murderer confess'd dare talk of justice!

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Andrew II. King of Hungary:</i>	}	<i>Mr. Mills.</i>
Commonly called <i>Andrew</i>		
of <i>Jerusalem.</i>		
<i>Conrade, Prince of Moravia.</i>		<i>Mr. Milkward.</i>
<i>Elmerick.</i>		<i>Mr. Quin.</i>
<i>Bathori, Father to Ismena.</i>		<i>Mr. Wright.</i>
<i>Belus, Secretary to Elmerick.</i>		<i>Mr. Winstone.</i>

W O M E N.

<i>Matilda, Queen of Hungary.</i>	}	<i>Mrs. Butler.</i>
<i>Ismena, Wife to Elmerick.</i>		<i>Mrs. Mills.</i>
<i>Zenomira, Attendant on the</i> <i>Queen.</i>		<i>Miss Bennet.</i>

Lords, Deputies, and Guards.

S C E N E the King's Palace at *Buda.*

ELMERICK.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Scene Ismena's Apartment in Elmerick's House.

Enter Ismena alone.

WHEN we are blest even to our utmost wish,
Is it the nature of the restless mind
To work its own disquiet, and extract
Pain from delight? O *Elmerick*! my life,
My lord, my husband! when I count with transport
Thy amiable virtues, when I think
How fair a treasure I possess in thee,
I'm lost in scenes of soft, bewild'ring bliss;
Yet fear, I know not why, some fatal change
May rob me of my happiness.

Enter Bathori.

Bath. So melancholy, and alone, my daughter!

Ism. My Lord is with some Nobles of the States.

Bath. You shou'd remember 'tis the greatest honour
To be so oft consulted, so rever'd
By men who stand the foremost in their country.

Ism. Remember too, how dear a sacrifice
My *Elmerick* made, when he forsook retreat,
And chang'd our solid peace for courts and senates.
We knew no want, no avarice, no ambition:
Intruding business and corroding cares,
'Though hid beneath the pomp of wealth and power,
Must

Must take from our felicity ; who find,
Each in the other, what the world besides
Is much too poor to give.

Bath. You must not weigh
Your single quiet with the good of millions.
Your noble husband's rank and high abilities
Have destin'd him the servant of his country :
For *Elmerick* has every gift of Heaven
That renders publick care a debt to virtue,
And soft retirement poor, unmanly baseness.

Ism. Still you forget the graces that have made
Your only child, your lov'd *Ismena*, happy.

Bath. Thou dearest comfort of thy father's age !
My heart is pleas'd that thou art mindful of them.
Your well placed love, this tender gratitude,
Are proofs you merit, what you justly boast of,
To have the hand and heart, to be the wife
Of *Elmerick*——I cannot praise thee higher.

Ism. The highest praise my vainest wish aspires to,
Is that my ardent love bears some proportion
To its exalted object.

Bath. Both are happy ;
And Heaven preserve you so !——I judge that now
The States may be assembling in the Palace,
As summon'd by the King. He has not met them
Since they elected *Elmerick* their Palatine,
Pursuant to the grant he gave his people.
He means this morning to appoint a Regent,
Then to set forth for *Palestine*.

Ism. What dangers
He generously meets !

Bath. For me, I own,

I ne'er

I ne'er approv'd this rash, romantick war,
Begot by hot-brained bigots, and fomented
By the intrigues of proud, designing priests.
All ages have their madness, this is ours.
The King is wise, benevolent and brave,
But covetous of Glory to excess ;
And if he steer amiss, 'tis in a torrent
That bears down all before it.

Ism. His fair Queen,
No doubt, will greatly mourn so long an absence.

Bath. Perhaps she may.---Yet---I cou'd wish, *Ismena*,
(I speak in confidence and with concern)
The Queen were wise, and gentle like thy self.

Ism. My place and near attendance on her person
Have given me means to know her, and, 'tis sure,
To Nature none owes more.

Bath. Yes, I confess,
Matilda wants not charms, sharp female wit,
And dignity of form ; but her warm passions,
And the wild eagerness with which she follows
Each gust of inclination, may, I fear,
Prove dangerous to herself, the King and Realm.

Ism. Detraction cannot say she e'er transgress
The strictest bounds of virtue.

Bath. Suppose her chaste, 'tis pride, not virtue in her.
Can she be virtuous, who beheld, unmoved,
The treacherous arts of her licentious brother
To tempt your virgin honour, while he stay'd
To grace his sister's nuptials, and stained *Buda*
With his *Moravian* riot ?

Ism. I reveal'd
Her thoughtless conduct, which indeed amazed me,
Only

Only to you, my Father.—Let it die:
Be all her errors mended and forgot,
Her worth improv'd and honour'd.

Bath. Nay, I wish it:

Wou'd I cou'd add, with truth, I hop'd it too!—
Thou dearest pleasure of my ebbing life,
With thee conversing, I forgot the hours
Were passing on—I go: The States demand me.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

SCENE II. *The Assembly of the States.*

1st L. That the King means this day to join the army
Is then no longer doubted?

Elm. No, my Lord.

1st Ld. May health and safety wait upon his person!

2d Ld. May fortune never cross his generous labours,
But victory and triumph bring him home!

Elm. So please just Heaven! 'Tis the devoutest wish
Of every honest heart in *Hungary*.

To them enter King, Bathori, Attendants.

King taking a Seat of State.

K. You Nobles, and you Deputies of *Hungary*,
And you confederate States that own our scepter,
Know, I this day depart for *Palestine*:
Where, like a mourning matron, by her sons
Neglected or forgot in her distress,
Lyes sacred *Sion*, captived and profaned.
But ere I name the Regent of my Kingdoms,
Which you shall witness, and, I trust, applaud;
I greet, with heart-felt joy, your wise election
Of *Elmerick*, first Palatine of *Hungary*:
The Conservator of your laws and rights,

Guardian

Guardian of Liberty, and Judge of Power.
His manly virtues answer my big thought,
And give full vigour to the awful title:
Wisdom consummate in the fire of youth,
The hardiest valour join'd with soft compassion,
And justice never to be brib'd or awed——

Elm. My life's poor labours never can deserve
My Country's favour, or my Sov'reign's praise.
And O perpetual source of bounteous virtue,
Who but a King, whose wide expanding heart
Feels a whole people's bliss, humanely great,
Wisely ambitious, e'er, benignant, plan'd,
In his high soaring thought, so large a gift ;
Gave to a subject right to judge his acts,
And say to sov'reign power—Here shalt Thou stay ?

K. What we have thought of Regal Government,
Its bounds and end, I hope our reign has witness'd.
To make a People wretched, to entail
The curse of bondage on their drooping race,
Can add no joy to sense, can sooth no passion
That hath its seat in nature——May reproach
Sound through the loathing world his guilty name
Who dares attempt it.——What can be his motive,
Whom long descent, or a free People's love,
Has raised an earthly God, so to degrade
Himself, and take the office of a Fiend !——
Too foul mistake !——Let me aspire to glory
By glorious means ! To have my reign illustrious,
The theme of loud-tongued fame and ecchoing Nations,
May it give birth to an eternal Æra,
And be the happy date when Publick Liberty
Receiv'd its last perfection !

Bath.

Bath. Matchless King!

How shall thy subjects pay this God-like gift!

K. Defend it as your lives——Said I your lives?
That's poor, and far unworthy its importance;
Defend it as you wou'd your fame and virtue.
And if, hereafter, some ill-judging Monarch
Invade your rights with bold oppressive power;
Under the conduct of your Palatine,
Repel by Legal Force the known injustice,
And place the sacred crown of holy *Stephen*,
Thus forfeited and impiously prophaned,
On some more worthy head. (*Pauses*)—All gracious
Heaven!

Affection melts their hearts——There's not an eye
But swells with tears in all this great Assembly.
The active warmth of youth, the cool experience
Of venerable age, the statesman's wisdom,
And hardy foldier's courage, overcome
By obligation, melt to infant softness,
And speechless tears.

Bath. O gracious Monarch!

1st Ld. Father!

Elm. Glory, and Guardian Angel of our country!

K. Why, let the envious call this flattery,
Unmanly art! to which unhappy slaves
Are forced to form their lips——You need it not——
My last, just care has made it useless to you.

Elm. When gratitude o'erflows the swelling heart,
And breaths in free and uncorrupted praise
For benefits received; propitious Heaven
Takes such acknowledgment as fragrant incense,
And doubles all its blessings.

K. 'Tis

K. 'Tis enough——

The powerful theme had sway'd my glowing thought
From the important business of this day,
Which claims your high attention——I shall now
Repose the Sov'reign Power in proper hands,
During the war I wage in *Palestine*.

Elm. May Heaven direct your choice !
For what is law more than the breathless form
Of some fall'n Hero, spiritless and cold,
To be despis'd and trampled on at pleasure
By every bold offender ; unless steady
And vigorous execution give it life.

K. 'Tis justly urged, my Lord, and you yourself
Shall in my absence guard it from contempt
By vigorous execution. Take the sword,
And bear it not in vain.——Shou'd any dare,
Presuming on their birth or place for safety,
Disturb my subjects peace with bold injustice ;
Let no consideration hold your hand,
As you shall answer it to me and Heaven :
Think well how I would act, or ought to act,
Were I in person here, and do it for me.

Elm. An awful trust, my Liege, and strongly urged :
And while I rule your realm, shou'd some bold crime
Demand the righteous rigour you enjoin ;
May Heaven deal with me, as I shall discharge
With faithfulness and courage, or neglect,
Through treachery or fear, the painful duty.

K. Unblest'd a King, whose self-reproaching heart
Ne'er, calm, reposes on a subject's virtue !
Thank Heaven, I am not such : I taste the safe,
The generous joys of confidence well placed.

B

With

With you, brave *Elmerick*, the States have lodg'd
 Their noblest right, and I dare trust my crown.
 But there is yet a dearer, tenderer charge,
 And let me recommend, ere I dismiss you,

[*Turning to the States.*

More than my crown, my Queen to your affections.
 I go, once more, to take my last adieu,
 Then lead my hallow'd banners to the East. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E III.

Queen and Zenomira.

Q. To stoop beneath a constant weight of cares
 To purchase ease for others!----Poor and senseless!
 Injurious to himself, and base to me!

Zen. The King is held by all most wise and just.

Q. For me, I cannot think so----Then this start
 To *Palestine*, this warlike pilgrimage,
 This holy madness will bear no excuse.
 Need he regard whether the line of *Baldwin*,
 Or *Saladin*, be victors in a clime
 So far remote, who might enjoy repose
 And pleasure here? I tell thee, *Zenomira*,
 I'm not, by far, so happy as *Ismena*.
 For *Elmerick*, the theme of every tongue,
 Can love: And to our sex, love crowns all merit.

Zen. Madam, the King-----

Q. He comes to take his leave. Ungrateful man!
 He merits not my heart, who vainly dares
 To rate his pride above it. [*Exit Zenomira.*

Enter

Enter King.

K. The urgent business of this day, *Matilda*,
How has it robb'd me of thy dear society !

Q. You will have constant business, Sir---The camp
Detains you from me now, and now the senate ;
And when your court receives you, restless still,
And fired with some bright phantom of ambition,
You mix with hoary heads, and plan new glories.

K. If, faithful to the trust imposed by Heaven,
I oft have born with grief thy painful absence ;
O think me not less thine, my lov'd *Matilda*,
But pity my sad duty.

Q. Said you duty ?-----
Your idol Honour rather-----that you worship-----
That sends your banners to the distant East,
To fruitless wars, and visionary triumphs.

K. Honour's a duty, Madam, and the noblest ;
And ardent I pursue the powerful impulse.
There are (with shame I speak it) those who loiter
In this religious warfare. The Emperor
Cannot unite his *Germans* ; *France* delays :
Grim death has forced the slaught'ring battle-axe
From *Cœur de Lion's* strong unerring hand ;
And *John of England*, his unthrifty brother,
Repell'd abroad, prepares his luckless sword
To wound the liberties, rescind the laws,
And sheath it in the bowels of his kingdom.
Our troops are ready : *Sion's* mournful cries
Call loud for instant succour-----and I go.

Q. Then I must learn to bear my King's neglect,
And endless solitude.

K. No, my *Matilda* ;
 The time will come when wars rough labours ended
 Shall give me up devoted to thy beauties,
 And all our days to come shall blended flow
 In one pure stream of calm, unruffled love.

Q. Our days to come
 Are dark uncertainties ; and doating age,
 Shou'd we attain it, painful or insipid.

K. Do not distract me, call back these reproaches.
 Urge not, my Queen, thy soft'ning power too far,
 But think thy husband's triumphs will be thine.——
 Mean-time, to soften my unwilling absence
 Thy brother comes, the partner of thy heart :
 Each day my Court expects him from *Moravia*.
 His sprightly temper, his engaging converse,
 Will steal all sorrow from thee.

Q. In my brother
 I still have found a friend ; and friendship now
 Is all the good my widow'd heart must hope for.-----
 But in your absence, Sir, the Sovereign Power
 To whom intrust you ? Whom must I obey ?

K. Lord *Elmerick*, as you know was my fix'd
 purpose,
 I have appointed Regent of my Kingdoms.

Q. The world talks loud of *Elmerick's* fair merits,
 And I, unused to think on such grave subjects,
 Congratulate your choice.——

K. You're just ; and kind
 To crown with your auspicious praise the man
 Whom I so love and honour. —— May I hope
 That all those lips have dropt less gentle to me,

Was but the tender fears of love alarm'd ?
Oh say but this ! and I will think it kinder
Than all th' endearments of affected fondness.

Q. Think what will please you best, and that I said
it,——

And may the shining Fame you seek so far
Pay your long labours !

K. One embrace, *Matilda* !

May Heaven on all thy days shed sweetest comfort,
And peace with angel wings o'ershade thy slumbers !
Eager for Fame, and zealous to chastize
The foes of Heav'n, I thought I could resist
This heart-invading softness——Fond mistake !
Call'd to begin the task by leaving thee,
I find my fancy'd heroism vain,
And all the feeble tender man returns.——
I must not give it way.——Once more, farewell.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

The End of the First Act.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Queen and Ismena.

Q. YES, I resent the King has left me thus!—
Thus in the bloom of youth to be forsaken!—
I'll have revenge.

Ism. Forgive your servant, Madam ;
Grief and impatience interrupt your reason :
You think not what you speak, or will not think it,
When time shall give you leisure to reflect.
The King, howe'er in this——

Q. Excuse him not ;
I never lov'd him, and now never will.——
You seem amaz'd ! Is it so very strange,
A lady should not love the man she weds ?

Ism. My happy fortune, Madam, makes me think so,
Nor wou'd I lose that thought to be a Queen.

Q. I wou'd I were no Queen!—at least not here !
When in *Moravia*, at my father's court,
The only daughter and the darling joy
Of my fond Parents love ; officious Fame
Proclaim'd me as a miracle of beauty :
Justly or not is now of small importance,
'Twas then thought true, and Princes came in crouds
To love and be refus'd. The noblest triumphs
Our sex can boast, charm'd my aspiring thoughts ;
And constant revels, feastings, mirth and musick
Sooth'd every sense. No grave grimace, that's call'd
Religion

Religion here ; no visionary schemes
 To set the Rabble free, and fetter Kings ;
 No anxious cares for what regards not us,
 Remote posterity ; obscur'd the lustre,
 Or damp'd the joys of *Olmütz*' gallant court :
 Soft am'rous sighs were all the mournful sounds,
 And deep intrigues to gain some haughty Fair
 Were all the business of that happy place
 I left for this proud, solemn seat of dulness,
 This pompous grave of pleasure, hated *Buda*.

Ism. What wit and charms has education marr'd

(*Aside.*)

Q. Then judge, *Ismena*,
 Who know'st this formal Court, and sober King,
 My hopeless, lost condition.

Ism. May I hope
 Your Majesty's forgiveness, should I ask,
 The absence of your royal Lord excepted,
 What more cou'd kind, indulgent Heaven bestow ?
 Power, wealth, and honour wait upon your will.

Q. Power, wealth and honour feed man's high
 ambition ;

But for our humbler sex, we're true to nature,
 And rest content with pleasure. But to me
 Pleasure's impossible, whilst my grave Master
 More than forbids it by his wise example.
 And then this last injurious flight has mov'd me
 Beyond the power to pardon.

Ism. Shou'd my Lord
 Have left me thus, I might, I must have griev'd—
 I think to death ; but sure no angry thought
 Had ruffled my sad bosom.

Q. You, *Ismena*,
Are a rare instance of felicity,
A happy, marry'd woman.

Ism. 'Tis true, my Lord,
Or I am partial, has not many equals:
The manly beauty of his pleasing face,
His perfect symmetry and noble mein,
His tender language, and his soft address——

Q. I am no stranger to them--Wou'd I were! (*Aside.*)

Ism. But then the matchless beauty of his mind—
Ne'er were the great and tender so united
As in the soul of *Elmerick*.

Q. Rash creature! (*Aside.*)

Ism. How happy were our sex if more were like him!

Q. Why was not I reserv'd for such a lover?
My passions must have vent. (*Aside.*) Gentle *Ismena*!
Wait for me near the fountain in the garden.

(*Exit Ismena.*)

When murm'ring at my fate, to set before me,
And in so full a light, those very graces
That long have charm'd me! Vain, officious woman!—
Why have you, Heaven, so form'd this heart for love,
With no more reason, than you must foresee,
Subservient to that love, will make me wretched?

Enter Elmerick.

Elm. Hail to the Queen! and may the news I bear,
Prove a glad omen of my future service
From this auspicious hour! Your royal brother,
The valiant *Conrade*, is arriv'd at *Buda*.

Q. Now by the joys my soul has long been lost to,
This kind, this gen'rous haste to bring relief

To

To a forsaken solitary Queen,
Does justice to your character. My thanks——
But that's a poor reward, current at courts
For want of something better.——I wou'd find
Some solid favour to engage your service,
Worthy of me, and worthy your acceptance.

Elm. Is there a man so venal or so vain,
As not to think the happiness to serve
So good and great a Queen, a full reward
For all he can perform?——And then the honour
Done to my wife!——Your favour to *Ismena*
Exceeds all gratitude.

Q. Gall, gall and poison. (*Aside.*)

Elm. Madam, I take my leave. The Prince is en-
t'ring.

Q. My Lord, when our first interview is over,
We shall expect your presence.

(*Exit Elmerick.*)

Enter Conrade.

Conr. My *Matilda*!

Long let me press thee to my joyful breast,
I who have often mourn'd thy tedious absence,
Thou dear, dear object, both by choice and nature,
Of my fond love, my sister and my friend!

Q. And was it tedious? Did you think it long?
Why should I doubt it? When was you not kind?
When did thy active genius let me want
New pleasures to repel intruding thought,
And ~~last~~ the lazy minutes into swiftness?
Our Parents——

Conr.

Conr. Are well. There is no sorrow in *Moravia*
But from the want of thee.

Q. I have not known,
'Till now, a joyful moment since I left it.

Conr. We have been happy : And shou'd Fortune
prove

Once more propitious to me, those gay fires
That shone so bright at *Olmütz*, may revive
And blaze at *Buda*.

Q. What, my dearest *Conrade*,
Has *Hungary* to give worth thy desiring?

Conr. Forgive, *Matilda*, while I own my Heart,
Though I have ever lov'd and fondly love thee,
I had, besides the joy of seeing thee,
Another powerful hope that fired my soul,
And wing'd my haste to *Buda*.

Q. You surprize me!

Conr. When first I led you here to warlike *Buda*,
And gave you blooming to your royal husband,
You must remember, during my short stay,
I saw and lov'd the daughter of *Bathori*.

Q. I know it well, and all her rigors to you ;
But thought your am'rous and inconstant heart
(Lost often, and as many times retriev'd
Since I beheld you last) had not retain'd
The least impression of *Ismena's* charms.

Conr. Not all the gaudy pleasures I once courted,
Can cure the rooted passion, raging still,
Invincible as ever. It has cost me,
While distant from her charms I pin'd in absence,
A sickness almost fatal to my life ;
Which though my youth recover'd, the soft poison

Still

Still preys upon thy brother's heart, *Matilda*,
And makes me hate my being :——I will die,
Or find relief. And therefore am I come,
Determined, to attempt my fate once more :¹
My state cannot be worse.——That she is wedded
To *Elmerick*, I know : Yet he's a subject ;
And were he more, his greatness shou'd not awe me.

Q. This favours my design on *Elmerick's* heart,—
If he should gain *Ismena*, *Elmerick's* mine. (*Aside.*)
Let me dissuade you from a wild attempt,
Your rashness must defeat. Lord *Elmerick*,
Who now resides, as Regent, in the Palace,
Must soon perceive your love, and will find means
To guard his honour, and secure *Ismena*
From bold solicitation.

Con. I'm convinc'd
That course were wrong, do you direct me better,
Or see me die the victim of despair.

Q. How, *Conrade* ! can you think I would assist
In such a purpose ?——But were virtue silent,
A cloud of difficulties rise before me :
Lord *Elmerick* is Palatine and Regent——
Terms must be kept with him. And then *Ismena*,
Fond of her Lord, and vain of such a choice,
Will hear you with disdain. For happy *Elmerick*
Fills all her tender wishes, all her heart.——
Yet should some accident disturb their loves,
There might be hope : For she who once has lov'd,
May love again. The softness in our frame,
That has dispos'd us first to the fond passion,
Is ready to betray us ever after.

Conr. This distant glimpse of hope, this poor reversion,

To one that loves as I do, is despair——

But 'tis from her alone, who rules my fate,

That I can learn my doom. Where may I find her?

Q. I gave her charge to wait me in the garden,
And soon shall meet her there.

Conr. Unkind *Matilda*,

Cou'dst thou know this, and yet detain me here?

I wou'd not lose the present, lucky moment

For ages in reversion. *(Exit Conrade.)*

Q. Yes, my *Conrade*,

Though you was ever dearly welcome to me,

I now behold you with unusual transport.

O! may your sighs, your vows, your importunities
Subdue *Ismena's* heart; as *Elmerick*,

Without their pleasing aid, has conquer'd mine:

At least divide, break, and confound their peace:

Raise storms of jealousy, and fill their souls

With darkness and despair: 'Till in the tempest

Love be for ever lost, and the wild wreck

Compel abandon'd *Elmerick* to seek

For shelter in some near and friendly port,

And find the blest asylum in my arms. *(Exit Queen.)*

S C E N E II. A Garden.

Conrade and Ismena.

Conr. Her charms are still the same, and at her sight

Love burns with double fury: Yet I want

My former resolution: I am aw'd,

And scarce have courage left me to approach her.

(Aside.)

——Be

—Be not surpriz'd, adorable *Ismena*,
To see me here, and see me still your slave :
Yes, those all-powerful beauties, that subdu'd
My ranging heart to constancy and truth,
Still hold the binding charm : To love *Ismena*
Is, as I feel too well, to love for ever.

Ism. As you are brother to my royal mistress,
I'm not surpriz'd to see you here, Prince *Conrade* ;
But as I'm wife to noble *Elmerick*,
To hear you hold this language does surprize me.

Conr. Nor time, nor absence, nor the last despair,
For I have prov'd them all, can cure my passion,
A mortal passion, that must soon consume me,
Unless you bid me live.

Ism. Live, and be wise ;
Live, and be noble : break your vassalage
To passions that debase the name of Prince,
While that of Man is forfeited and lost.

Conr. This high disdain, this counsel urg'd in scorn,
Is cruel and unjust.—Too haughty Fair!
Wilt thou ne'er learn compassion? Never melt
At my long tender sorrows? Let me hope—

Ism. What have I done to raise your vanity
To this presumptuous heigh?

Conr. O call it love,
And I'll confess it soars to all the heights
Of fond, distracted passion.

Ism. Impious trifles!
Are these the arts by which false man betrays?—
Unhappy women! do they yield to guilt
Because a madman raves, a traitor flatters?—
I thought, vain Prince, I had been better known ;

And

And that your rash attempt when here before,
At least, had taught you wisdom.

Conr. I confess

My love was then to blame, so to expose
Your virgin honour: You have now a husband—

Ism. You sink beneath my scorn—— I have a
husband——

And such an one as loose incontinence
Would want the will to wrong. Sir, if I bear
This insult unreveng'd, 'tis to my prudence,
Not to your birth and name, you owe your safety.

Conr. My safety! —Hell! ——let the proud *Palatine*

But dare to threaten thus——

Ism. Take my advice,
And dare not to provoke him. Thus far, Prince,
I judge my scorn sufficient.

Conr. Oh! 'tis too much, and all that I can fear:—
I'll conquer it or perish.

Ism. Since your reason
Is wholly lost in this impetuous frenzy,
To shun your madness shall be all my care.

Conr. Fly where you will, honour, as well as love,
Compels me now for ever to pursue you.

Ism. The light, vain Libertine grows formidable!—
His insolence may lay a scene of ruin,
That chills my blood with horror but to think on.

Conr. Her Cynick father!—There's another cham-
pion.

What with her innate pride and high alliances
She makes a strong resistance; and my passion,

Enter

! Enter Bathori.

By opposition irritated, burns
More fiercely to attempt the noble conquest.

(Exit Conrade.

Bath. Prince *Conrade* just now leaves you?

Ism. Let him go.

Bath. You seem disorder'd.

Ism. Howe'er misplac'd by Fortune, Nature form'd
me

For the domestick joys of calm retreat :
I'm sick of court already.

Bath. For what cause?

You know your Lord, by his high trust compell'd,
Here must reside: It cannot be dispens'd with.

Ism. 'Tis true, and all our happy days are past :
For insolence and *Conrade* still pursue me.
Then judge, when this shall reach my husband's ear,
As soon it must, how will his soul endure
This outrage on my virtue and his honour?
Shall I not see his hands stain'd with the blood
Of the Queen's brother, or the noble *Elmerick*
(A thousand, thousand deaths are in the thought)
Bleed by the rage of impious, desperate *Conrade*?

Bath. Unheard-of insolence! He shall be taught
The difference between the passive slaves
Of loose *Moravia*, and our free *Hungarians*.
Your Lord must never learn this daring insult :
For know, my Child, I hold myself sufficient
To shield a daughter from this princely Libertine,
And awe him into silence and respect.

Ism.

• *Ism.* You know him not: He is not to be aw'd:
There is but one, one only way to shun him:
Let me forsake the court, with you retire
'Till *Conrade* quits the kingdom.

Bath. Rightly judg'd.

Thy prudence is thy guard; safer in that
From being made the theme of busy rumour,
Ever injurious to a woman's fame,
Than in an army rais'd for thy defense.
My house and arms are ready to receive thee.

Exeunt.

End of the Second Act.

A C T

A C T III.

S C E N E I

Queen and Zenomira.

Q. **B**E dumb, vain, busy wretch: Because
thou'rt trusted,
Dost thou presume to offer thy advice?
Wou'd'st thou be hated too?

Zen. Think, royal Madam,
To whom I, undeserving, owe my fortune.
My gratitude——

Q. A servant's gratitude!——
Consider well your interest and your safety.
Remember I, who made you what you are,
Can make you more, or speak you into nothing.
If *Elmerick* return the love I proffer,
I shall employ you often: Shou'd he not,
(Do not my eyes dart ruin while I speak it)
My first command in this shall be my last.
Seek him now,
And bring him hither.——No, I see my brother:
Wait in the anti-chamber 'till he's gone,
Then do as I directed. [Exit Zenomira.]

Enter Conrade.

Conr. Curst be the hour,
When, fated with delight, I quitted *Olmutz*,
Where all my vows were heard with extasy,
And beauty took its value from my breath,

C

To

To meet contempt, despair and death at *Buda*.

Ismena at this instant leaves the court :

No hope is left, no patience——I'm distracted.

The subtle tyrant Love, who led me long

Through flow'ry paths, and spread elysium round me ;

Whose fires, 'till now, serv'd but to heighten pleasure,

And quicken it to transport ; has betray'd me

To plagues and torments not to be supported.

Ismena is essential to my being. O *Matilda* !

Assist me with your counsel, or I'm lost.

Q. Alas! he knows not it too much imports me.

[*Aside.*

Do not abandon hope, but leave despair

To fools and cowards. Know, exalted souls

Have passions in proportion violent,

Resistless, and tormenting : They're a tax

Imposed by nature on preheminnence,

And fortitude, and wisdom must support them.

Conr. Who but *Matilda* e'er cou'd flatter misery,

And prove superior merit from our weakness?

At thy awak'ning voice my hope revives.

Coud'st thou but stop *Ismena's* purpos'd flight

(And nothing is too hard for wit like thine)

I yet may triumph o'er her pride and virtue.

Q. By stratagem to keep *Ismena* here

Can serve no end : When she perceives the fraud,

She'll fly more irritated than before.

Conr. But I shall see her first.

Q. What can you hope

From such an interview? while *Elmerick*

Continues kind, he'll prove too strong a rival.

Her pride and virtue are meer accidents :

She

She chanc'd to marry where she chanc'd to like ;
 But should he, touch'd with some new flame, neglect
 her,
 As time is fruitful of more strange events,
 Her pride wou'd make her hate him.—— You must
 wait.

Conr. You talk of ease whole ages hence to one
 Stretch'd on the rack of violent desire.
 By Heav'n I will pursue to her retreat,
 And bear her thence in spite of Father, Husband, !
 And every sword that dares oppose my purpose.
 She shall return to court, she shall behold
 And hear my raging love, she shall be mine.

Q. Forbear such wild and unbecoming thoughts ;
 The *Palatine* is Regent, you a stranger,
 And I, perhaps, have reasons of my own
 To keep his good opinion. If to see her
 Within this Palace, with the due respect
 You owe her birth and rank, may satisfy
 For once your present ardour, I'll assist you.
 Love may perhaps inspire your soothing tongue
 With eloquence to soften, and persuade
 The melting Fair to break her resolution,
 And hear at least, if not return your Love :
 The firmest purpose of a Woman's heart
 To well-tim'd, artful flattery may yield.

Conr. And shall I see again my lov'd *Ismena* ?
 Oh say what pow'r, what art can bring her hither ?

Q. *Belus*, chief secretary to the Regent,
 Shall be, unknowingly, a proper agent :
 He has been *Zenomira's* lover long——
 But see she comes, she must not see you now :

Trust in a sister's love, and wait th' event.

[Exit Conrade.

Enter Zenomira.

Zen. Madam, my Lord the Regent will attend you.

Q. Is *Belus* still thy lover, *Zenomira*?

Zen. So he professes, Madam.

Q. Then shou'd you feign a message from his Lord,
He'd not distrust you?

Zen. His believing passion
Ne'er yet has seem'd to doubt whate'er I utter'd.
What must I say?

Q. Say that her Lord intreats
Ismena, some time hence, to meet him here.
I think she has conceiv'd some slight disgust
Which I wou'd fain remove. This artifice
I shall so well account for when I see her,
You and your lover shall incur no blame.

Zen. What dangers wou'd I meet, cou'd I improve
Your friendship for that Lady! May I hope
Your thoughts of *Elmerick* are chang'd already?

Q. The plague of confidants!----Do as directed.

[Exit Zenomira.

And yet this wretch, this little busy wretch,
Whose love, whose care and counsel I despise,
Is infinitely wiser than *Matilda*!

I've sent for *Elmerick*—— But let me think
Ere yet my sliding feet forego the shore,
That quitted once can never be recovered,
In what a boundless ocean am I plunging,
With only one uncertain light to guide me!——
If that should fail, I sink o'erwhelm'd for ever. ——

But

But shou'd the grateful *Elmerick* stretch forth
 His saving hand, and snatch me from the billows,
 Love will return a thousand solid joys
 For every transient pain.——But O the hazard !---
 A woman and a Queen to offer love,
 And hear herself refus'd !——'Tis misery !
 'Tis everlasting shame ! 'Tis death and Hell !
 I will not think so poorly of my fate,
 My self, or *Elmerick*——My present lot
 Is cheerless and forlorn——Impetuous gusts
 Of stormy passions drive me through the gloom,
 Unsteady and uncertain. All before me
 Is the profound, unfathomable deep ;
 And all behind a dark and boundless waste——
 But he appears, the star that must direct me
 To peace and joy——or light me to my ruin.

Enter Elmerick.

I fear, my Lord, this importunity
 May interrupt your labours for the Publick,
 I shall become your trouble.

Elm. I serve the King,
 I serve the publick, Madam, serving you :
 My pride and joy is to attend your person.

Q. And are you pleas'd, most noble *Elmerick*,
 To hear a woman's talk, and sooth my cares ?
 But you are wond'rous good : And let me boast
 That I've a heart susceptible of kindness,
 In all its various forms, ev'n to a fault.

Elm. How infinitely bountiful is Nature ?
 Giving such softness to the pleasing sex,
 As well rewards the toils she lays on ours.

If we excel, 'tis when the glorious hopes
Of serving or delighting you inspire us :
And to obtain your smiles is to be happy.

Q. If happiness be in our pow'r to give,
'Tis hard to want the blessings we bestow :
To love and to be lov'd is to be happy.

Elm. Your sex, by nature form'd to merit love,
Can rarely want it.

Q. Possibly the brave,
Who hate ingratitude, wou'd not despise
A lady who renounced her native pride,
The painful'st proof our sex can give of love.

Elm. A generous man must think it double grace,
When love and virtue condescend to chuse him.

Q. My Lord, shou'd fate reduce some hapless
woman,

Trembling and almost dying with confusion,
To make an offer of her love to you ;
And such a love as instant death or madness
Were certain to ensue, shou'd you refuse it ;
How wou'd you act ? How treat a suppliant heart,
Whose weakness you had caus'd ?

Elm. Your pardon, Madam ;
'Tis what I can't suppose, and asks no answer.

Q. Why not suppose ? Is it impossible ?
Say—I—shou'd love ; and trusting to your honour,
Have laid this fair occasion in your way
To break my fall, and spare me half my shame.

Elm. What vanity
Have I betray'd, what baseness, what presumption,
To need so strange a trial ? If you doubt
My loyalty, and think I entertain

Designs injurious to my Sov'reign's honour,
And your fair virtue——

Q. 'Tis too much, my Lord,
This diffidence, this cold reserve----You urge me
To what I wou'd avoid, beyond the bounds
I had prescrib'd myself: Yes, I cou'd die
Ere speak more plain; but must not have you think
I wou'd betray you. Heavens! what feign a passion
My soul ne'er knew! No, rather let me bear
Your utmost cruelty, your scorn and hatred,
For what I am, a lost unhappy Queen,
Than once be thought so mean and so perfidious.

Elm. Confounded and amaz'd, my fault'ring tongue
Scarce does its office.---Whither wou'd you urge me?
'Tis too severe a proof!-----As you are fair;
As charms like yours, may warm the coldest heart,
And shake the most resolv'd; what if my senses
Should mutiny against my weaker reason,
And tempt me to betray you,----horrid thought!----
To sure and endless ruin!

Q. What do you see
That looks like ruin here?

Elm. Guilt:-----That is ruin.

Q. Why be it so, your love shall make it glorious.

Elm. No, shame and just remorse must still pursue
Foul, trust-betraying love. And shou'd I say
Ev'n that were in my power, I must deceive you.
Shou'd wild desire, in an unguarded moment,
Rifle your charms, and lay your virtue waste;
The first return of thought wou'd bear me back
To her, who claims me by the dearest ties
Of virtuous, grateful love. Oh then return,

With recollected powers o'ercome this weakness,
And rise more glorious from this short decline.

Q. This short decline!——No, let victorious love
Here end a Queen's confusion, or your scorn
Sink my despairing and indignant soul
Where calm repose and hope shall never find it,
And your repentance come too late to save me.

Elm. I must assert your honour and my own.
Remember who I am, my trust, and office——
Almighty power! Shall I who bear the sword
To punish bold offenders, break the laws
Your providence has call'd me to defend?
Doth the least subject look to me for justice,
And shall my King, my ever-gracious master,
In recompence for his unbounded favour,
Receive the highest, most opprobrious wrong
A King or man can suffer?

Q. Shame and ruin!

Elm. Not to deceive you, Madam, not to flatter
Views so unworthy of yourself and me;
I must avow the ample power I hold,
Each thought, each toil, my life, devoted all
To gratitude and justice.

Q. Enough my Lord---your gratitude has charm'd
me——

Who shall oppose your justice? Here display it:
Rise by my ruin to the height of glory,
And let fame deafen the astonish'd world
With your triumphant virtue,

Elm. I wou'd triumph
But o'er your weakness, not your peace and fame:
So may you triumph too.---Oh hear me, Queen---

Q. I have heard too much,
I've heard my love refused.---Death! horror!---shame
And burning indignation!-----Pierce my heart,
Dispatch me, give me death. Is that too much?----
Is pity to the wretched, is compassion
Of every kind among the hateful crimes
The gen'rous, valiant *Elmerick* abhors?-----
Then give me this, afford the means of death,
And leave me to apply them.

[*Going to seize his sword.*]

Elm. Heavens! what frenzy
Possesses you!-----Yet hear me-----

Q. Off, be gone,
And let me die!

Elm. Safe as my soul the secret
Shall be preserv'd.

Q. What! be oblig'd to you!-----
Owe my precarious honour to your silence!-----
But keep your sword, I shall not want even that---

Elm. She is not to be trusted with her life-----
Royal, unhappy Fair, what can I say
To calm this raging tempest in your bosom?
For though I dare not be, what you must hate,
False to my trust and Sov'reign; I wou'd die
To save your life and honour, to restore
Your peace of mind, and raise declining virtue-----

Enter Conrade.

Shame and confusion!---Madam, see, the Prince----

Conr. Well may'st thou start, proud Lord: The
Queen's disorder,
And your confusion, must import some rudeness.

Q. Rude.

Q. Rudeness!——that word suggests an happy thought——

Yes, let despair and shame give way to vengeance.

[*Aside.*

O brother ! if I dare to call you brother
After the vile indignity I've suffer'd ;
That wretch, presuming on his boundless power,
Has talk'd to me of love.

Elm. What can I answer ?

When accidents concur with calumny,
Her pois'nous breath obscures the brightest fame,
And conscious virtue only can support us.

Conr. I saw and heard too much. The traitor's life
Is a mean sacrifice.

Elm. To plead my cause
Before a judge like thee, were mean and vain ;
Yet be advis'd, young Prince, nor rashly draw
A sword that can't avail you.

Q. Will you hear him ?

Think on the affront done to our royal house :——

Remember who he is, think on *Ismena* :

Who, if he 'scapes your sword, is lost for ever.

[*Tq* Conrade.

Conr. Then love inspire me.

[*They fight.*

Q. Ah ! my brother !——

Elmerick has th' advantage.

[*Conrade disarm'd.*

Elm. Take your life,

Young Prince. The false appearance that misled you,
Withholds my hand from punishing your rashness ;
But as the King's authority lives in me,
It may be fatal to repeat these insults,
Which nor my spirit, nor my place will bear.

Remember

Remember you are warn'd. For you, proud Queen,
 I pity and forgive your groundless hatred,
 And still have ~~that~~ attention to your happiness,
 To wish, even from my soul, you wou'd review,
 With an impartial eye, our different conduct.
 Wou'd you atone for error, make it short ;
 Reproach yourself, and use this as a motive,
 That he, whom you have wrong'd, scorns to reproach
 you. [Exit Elmerick.

Q. Most exquisite ! Legions of plagues and curses !
 Has Heaven nor Hell no vengeance in reserve,
 No bolts to strike, no light'ning to consume
 This overbearing traitor ; who has dar'd
 To talk of wrongs, reproach, and teach us fear !

Conr. Vain of th' advantage fortune gave him o'er
 me,

He us'd me with the last indignity,
 Gave me my life in scorn, check'd, rated, threaten'd.---
 But may my sword ne'er do me right in battle,
 May I be blasted with a coward's name,
 If I forget to pay him this foul outrage
 With double weight of vengeance.

Enter Zenomira.

Zen. Madam, *Ismena*-----

Q. Ha !-----*Ismena*, say'st thou !-----
 Say, *Zenomira*, that her Lord expects her.

[Exit Zenomira.]

Conr. *Ismena* in my power ! O Fortune, Fortune !
 From this blest hour I'll worship none but thee.
 I might have rack'd my thoughts in vain for ages,
 And ne'er have found the thousandth, thousandth part
Of

Of this complete, this most luxurious vengeance.

Q. Revenge, thou com'st too sudden ;
And risest to my view in such a form,
So shocking, so tremendous, that my soul
Shrinks back with horror now I shou'd embrace
thee.——

I justify thy scorn, proud *Elmerick*,
By this degenerate pity.——Let it be——
The haughty Regent's heart shall know such anguish,
That his complaints shall move ev'n Fiends to pity,
And vengeance to repent.——Retire, my *Conrade*,
And watch till I have sent *Ismena* hence.

[*Conrade retires.*]

I am so lost, that only horror, ruin,
Can cover my disgrace.

Enter Ismena looking round.

Ism. Lord *Elmerick* not here!——
Have my unheeded steps mistook their way?——
The Queen!——and deep in thought!

Q. She has not wrong'd me——
But misery is cruel and remorseless.

Ism. Forgive me, gracious Queen, if I am rude,
In vent'ring thus to press on your retirement ;
I was inform'd Lord *Elmerick* was here.

Q. Yes,——no,— he was——Good Heavens !
how shall I frame
My tongue to this vile office. [*Aside.*]

Ism. Are you well?——
Pray, Heaven preserve the Queen ! ——You're
strangely alter'd

——The

——The blood forfakes your cheeks——you ftart,
and tremble.

Q. You'd fee your Lord, seek him in thofe apart-
ments.

Ifm. For that I came; but dare not leave you thus.

Q. It was a fhort diforder, and 'tis paff——
Go, you're expected—— [Exit *Ifmena*.

She is gone, and ruin,

Inevitable ruin meets her there.

The mean, perfidious, barb'rous tafk is done.

My heart is adamant, or Heaven-born pity

Had melted my resentments. Poor *Ifmena*!

To be fo plac'd by fate, that love or vengeance

Cou'd find no paffage to the ftubborn breaft

Of *Elmerick*, but through thy breaking heart.

The End of the Third Act.

A C T

A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

Belus and Zenomira.

Belus. **T**HEN you confess that I've been made
the tool

Of some vile purpose, that my Lord ne'er sent
The message you deliver'd?—Faithless woman!
How shall I meet my Lord's just indignation,
Or make my conduct clear?

Zen. Prepare to curse,
Prepare to kill me, *Belus*; or my fears
Will quickly end me, and prevent your justice.

Bel. False woman! you've betray'd me into ruin.

Zen. O we are both betray'd, and both are ruin'd:
Both made t'affist in such a villainy
As Hell would blush to own, and Heav'n and Earth
Must join to see reveng'd. O cruel Queen!
Curst *Conrade*! lost *Ismena*!

Bel. *Conrade*!—Queen!

Zen. I say the Queen, and *Conrade*, and *Ismena*.
I saw her pass to the Queen's own apartment,
And cursed *Conrade* follow her soon after.
The rooms were bar'd.—But O the dismal cries,
The lamentations and the shrieks that followed!—

Bel. O lost *Ismena*! O unhappy Lord!—
Yes they become thee well, these gushing tears—

Zen.

Zen. But danger presses on us—What's our duty
In this extreme?

Bel. To be both just and cautious :
Not rashly to proclaim what we have heard,
But boldly dare to evidence the truth,
And justify our selves, whenever call'd on.—
But see, *Ismena* comes. Merciful Heav'ns!
Who that beholds her now, can doubt her suff'rings!

Zen. Heart-breaking spectacle!

Bel. She thinks us guilty :
We must avoid her sight. (*Going*) Her Father's here!—

Enter at opposite doors Bathori and Ismena.

O what a woful greeting! Now, by Heaven,
I know not which demands compassion most.

(*Exeunt Belus and Zenomira,*

Bath. The Regent sent to see *Ismena* here?—
Perhaps, then——

Ism. Oh!——

Bath. From whence that mournful sound!

Ism. Since life is but a witness of my shame,
Why do I longer bear it;

Bath. Some sad child
Of sorrow and despair, hiding her face,
And bending t'wards the earth, seems to bewail,
In bitterness of soul, some dire misfortune.

Ism. Why is the grave, the hospitable grave,
The silent seat of darkness, closed to me?

Almighty power!

(*raising her face*)

My Father! ha!——

(*seeing Bathori*)

Bath.

Bath. Impossible!—

Art thou *Ismena*?—Let me doubt it still—
To see thee thus, and know thee for my child,
Must split my brain with horror.

Ism. Since my woes

Renounce all cure, and, told, must blast the hearer;
O let me pour them out to wilds and deserts,
Shun all mankind, but chiefly those I love!

Bath. Come, my *Ismena*, to my sheltring bosom—
Close, closer still—and while I thus weep o'er thee,
Tell me, my child,—I know 'twill break my heart,
But let it break—come, tell me all thy suff'rings.

Ism. Think where I am, remember what I told
you

Of the detested rage of brutal *Conrade*.

Bath. Then art thou ruin'd, past redemption ruin'd!

Ism. Past, past redemption! every other ill
May be reliev'd by hope, or born with patience;
Here hope's impossible, and patience guilt.

Bath. Then the last sacred business is revenge—

Ism. Look down, all-pitying Heaven, on these my
woes,

Woes undeserv'd, and guiltless misery:
They plead my cause, the cause of innocence,
An injur'd, violated, matron's cause;
And shall they plead in vain?

Bath. Yes, my dear child,
In whom thy Father's secret soul rejoiced;
Whose goodness and whose happiness was such,
He found old age delightfull; let thy foes,

Those

Those kindred-fiends, to this thy just appeal
Plead their high rank, and try its weight with Heaven.

Ism. Or *Elmerick*, whose wrath perhaps they fear
Much more than Heaven's.

Bath. And therefore may avoid.
This asks some thought——

For who can answer for thy husband's transport,
Wife as he is, when he shall hear thy wrongs?

Ism. O what a scene of horror have you rais'd!
He'll rush, unarm'd, on our insidious foes,
Fall in their toils, and perish. Yes, my woes,
My miseries, enormous as they are,
Admit of aggravation.

Bath. His danger wou'd be great. Some hand less
fear'd
May make revenge more certain—Nay, 'twere kind
To spare thy Lord such anguish and despair.

Ism. O Heaven! and Earth! to whom shall I
complain,
Where pour my sorrows forth, if not to him?

Bath. Think you expose his life.

Ism. Death seal my lips!

Bath. Retire, and trust our vengeance to my pru-
dence.

Compose thy self, and when thou seest thy Lord—

Ism. Madness will seize me,
Or raging grief disclose the horrid secret. (Exit.

Bath. Suspence was ease to this confirm'd despair.
Would thou wert dead, *Ismena*!—O my child!
Thou art so lost beyond the reach of hope,
That love itself compels thy wretched Father
To wish thee dead; and in the bitterness

Of anguish mourn that ever thou wert born.
 May one kind grave soon hide thy woes and mine.
Ismena !—oh!—But while I weep thy wrongs,
 The spoiler lives.—Those are the Queen's apartments,
 And, doubtless, there her brutal brother lurks.
 Nor courts, nor shrines and altars shall protect him.
 What, ho! within! Prince of *Moravia*! *Conrade* !
 If thou'rt a man, stand forth, appear and answer.

Enter Conrade.

Conr. What insolence is this!—*Ismena's* Father!—

Bath. Yes, impious Prince, the Father of *Ismena*.

Conr. Forbear, rash man; this foul reproach I
 pardon.

Somewhat, I grant, is due to thy first transports
 Of jealous honour, and much more from me
 To fair *Ismena's* father.

Bath. Yes, thy blood.

Conr. Yet hold; I've that to say may calm thy fury.

Bath. Coward!

Conr. I smile, old man,
 And will be heard. Your daughter has been wrong'd,
 But most by her ungrateful, faithless Lord;
 Whose rude attempt upon the Queen, my sister,
 Makes what I've done a just, though bold, reprisal.
 Let him atone his treasonous presumption,
 Which, be assur'd, he answers with his life;
 And let me perish, if I not restore
 The injur'd honour of your lov'd *Ismena*
 With vast increase, and seat her on a throne.

Bath. I'd rather see her in the arms of death
 Than reigning o'er the universe with thee.

Mark

Mark thy progression,
 From rape to subornation, thence to murder.
 Long-suffering Heaven, whose patience thou hast tir'd,
 Calls loud for vengeance on thee. (Draws.)

Conr. Frantick man!

Enter Queen, Lords and Guards, who interpose.

Q. You Lords of *Hungary*, behold this fight,
 And vindicate your hospitality.
 Is this fit treatment for a royal guest?
 Will you endure this more than barb'rous outrage,
 And share the guilt of him and his confed'rates?
 Who twice this day, and for a cause too vile
 For me to name, have fought my brother's life.

1 Ld. How shall we reconcile what we have seen
 With your known wisdom, and consummate virtue?

Bath. Believe me, friends, there is, there is a cause
 For what you saw, for what I fain wou'd hide,
 These eyes still swelling with unmanly tears;
 Which when you know, you'll join with me to curse
 The chance that brought you, to prevent my justice.

1 Ld. The great, good man! so long, so often prov'd
 The fearless advocate of injur'd innocence,
 Wou'd he shed tears,
 And call for justice when no wrong was done him?
 Judge others as they please, I will not think it.

2 Ld. Nor I.

3 Ld. Nor I.

4 Ld. Why is that wrong conceal'd?

Bath. For most important reasons: Though I fear
 It will too soon be known.

4 *Ld.* 'Till then, my Lord,
Excuse me, if I think our country's honour
Must suffer by your conduct.

5 *Ld.* That's my judgment.

Bath. If your long knowledge of me cannot gain
Some credit to my word, at least suspend
Your hasty censures. (*Going.*)

1 *Ld.* We accept your word,
And vow to share your counsels, and your fortune.

Bath. You're truly noble. And be well assur'd
That 'tis an honest cause, and worth espousing.
(*Exeunt Bathori, 1, 2, 3 Lords.*)

2. Unmanner'd Traitors!
From you, my Lords, who think and act more nobly,
What may insulted Majesty expect?

4 *Ld.* All that becomes good subjects, who will guard
The venerable rights of hospitality.

5 *Ld.* *Bathori*, whose rash conduct we condemn,
At our joint charge, shall answer to the regent
His bold attempt.

2. The Regent!—
His daughter's husband! his confed'rate!—

5 *Ld.* No kindred, Madam, will prevail with *Elmerick*
To stop the course of justice.

2. Left to him,
Whose daring insolence has been the source
Of these fierce discords! Lords, if you regard
The publick safety, if you love the King,
Or dare defend your Queen from foulest insult;
Go find him now, attack him unprepar'd,
Stand not on forms, the least delay is fatal.

4 *Ld.*

4 *Ld.* Your pardon, Madam——

5 *Ld.* Our zeal shall never make assassins of us.

2. Nor men, tame Lords. You who have seen
my brother

Affaulted with a murderous intent,

Is this your boasted loyalty and honour?

4 *Ld.* These bind us to respect the character,
The dignity and person of the Regent.

5 *Ld.* If you, my Queen, or you, great Prince,
are wrong'd,

The King will do you justice. (*Exeunt Lords.*)

Conr. Canting traitors!

They go to join our foe, and swell his power:

This shrub of one day's growth, this idol Regent

Attracts their ready worship.

2. Let them go.

Now by the burning rage that drinks my blood

The fools spoke true: The King shall do us justice.

Conr. Elmerick,

His Influence——

2. We will accuse him first.

The King has not yet reach'd *Alba-Regalis*,

You soon will overtake him. What you saw

Of *Elmerick's* base purpose strongly urg'd,

Join'd with the earnest letters I shall write,

Will so alarm and prepossess the King;

That all complaints of their *Ismena's* sufferings

Will be regarded as an after feint,

A mean device to screen her guilty lord.

What are your thoughts?

Conr. That thou wast born to triumph.
This traitor, when unmask'd, shall fall unpitied
By all mankind, and hated by *Ismena*.

Q. Still your *Ismena* !

Conr. O my best *Matilda* !

The hopes that freed by death from her false husband,
And of his crimes convinc'd, she then may deign
To bless my vows, and share my future throne,
Are more than safety, life or vengeance to me.
My blind impetuous passion once desir'd
Those charms alone which violence cou'd gain ;
But now the avarice of love aspires
To mutual bliss, and more refin'd disdains
Th'imperfect pleasures which her will denied.

Q. She may be wholly and for ever yours.
You mark'd with how much care the cautious Sire
Preserv'd the secret of his daughter's wrongs.

Conr. Oh may I live to make her reparation
By gentlest love for wrongs which now my soul
Detests, and sickens at the vile remembrance.

Q. Live and be bless'd. I do not hate *Ismena* :
Cut off, that source of both our wrongs, her husband,
And my tormenting thirst of vengeance ceases.

Conr. Prepare your letters. I'll be instant ready.

(*Exit* *Conrade*.)

Q. Yes, I will humble that exalted mein,
And teach this new made Regent's pride submission.
He is secure, and let him be so still ;
'Till my revenge, a slighted Queen's revenge,
Burst forth, and blast him with unthought of ruin.

(*Exit* *Queen*.)

S C E N E

SCENE II. *Ismena's Apartment.*

Enter Elmerick running to embrace her.

Elm. Thou hast too long been absent, my *Ismena* !
A thousand anxious cares have fill'd my heart
Since I beheld thee last. But thou art found,
Who ne'er appear'd to my desiring eyes
But peace and comfort and delight came with thee.
O take me to thy arms, and quite extinguish
The memory of pain.

Ism. O misery ! *(refusing to embrace him.)*
Unequal'd misery ! I am excluded
For ever from those arms.

Elm. All-gracious Heaven !
What mean these broken thoughts, this lab'ring an-
guish,
My soul, thou sum of all my joys, my wife !

Ism. Thou hast no wife.

Elm. Distraction !

Ism. I'm a wretch
Without a name, and fain would quit my being.

Elm. Protect me, Heaven ! *Ismena* ! what dire
thought
Shakes thy sweet soul with such tempestuous agony ?
What ill so sudden, since we parted last,
Preventing even my fears, has burst upon thee ?
Say, tell me——

Ism. No, I cannot, dare not tell you :——
You cannot bear it. Though I ne'er conceal'd
A thought before, I must be silent now.

Elm. What can this mean? And yet I dread to know——

Perhaps the envious Queen has wrong'd my truth,
Can you suspect my love?

Ism. You love too well:

O that 'twere in your power to love me less!

Elm. Nay, then I'm lost indeed —Pronounce my doom;

But let me hear it folded in thy arms.

Ism. Avoid me, fly, and think of me no more.

Elm. What! shun my arms, *Ismena*!

Ism. There's my misery,

I must for ever shun 'em—Now, my Father,
Where is your prudence? Must I seem a monster,
Ungrateful, false to *Elmerick*; or bring
—Detested thought—pollution to his arms?

Elm. Pollution! madness!

Ism. I have been betray'd,
Basely betray'd to infamy and ruin,
Render'd unworthy of thy chaste embraces,
That execrable fiend, that monster *Conrade*
Has robb'd me of my honour.

Elm. Hear me, Heaven!

Let not this whirlwind of overwhelming passion
Tear up my being—Let me live whole ages
Though raging with despair, rather than die
And leave her unreveng'd.

Ism. Had not religion
Withheld my hand, whose law forbids self-murder,
(That short and easy cure for shame and anguish)
These sorrows ne'er had reach'd you.

Elm.

Elm. Talk not thus,
Talk not of dying ; thou art innocent,
Thy mind unstain'd ; thy wrongs shall be reveng'd,
And thou still blest my days.

Ism. It cannot be :
My power to bless is lost. I am the blot,
The only blot of *Elmerick's* fair honour.—
O ! why was it committed to the charge
Of one so heedless, so improvident,
Guardian unworthy of a trust so noble.

Elm. O my *Ismena* !

Ism. O my dearest Lord !
Alas you weep—I cannot bear your tears,
They melt my firmest purpose—but Farewell—
One last embrace, as on a dying friend,
It will not stain your glory to bestow
On your undone *Ismena*—

Elm. To my bosom
With tenderer fondness did I never press thee.
Here rest, my love, a while, and lose thy woes.

Ism. The greatest of my woes will make 'em short:
I feel my vital powers decay apace.
To part with thee, was all that e'er appear'd
Dreadful to me in death—that's past already—
And all to come is ease and soft repose.
When I'm no more, remember, *Elmerick*,
My reverend Father ; comfort and support him
The best you can : My loss will touch him nearly.
I see you burn for vengeance, but beware ;
The cruel, treach'rous Queen conspir'd with *Conrade*.

Elm. Alike remote from rashness and from fear,
I'll trace this hellish mystery to its source,

And

And deal to each, with an inflexible
And equal hand, the portion they deserve :
I'll weigh it as the action of my life
That must give name and value to the whole ;
And raise a monument to thee and justice
Shall strike exalted wickedness with terror,
And freeze the boiling blood of future *Conrades*.
Farewell, be patient, and expect th'event.

(Exeunt.)

End of the Fourth Act.

A C T

A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Queen alone.

Queen. **T**O recollect and judge our actions past,
May yield instruction——I approve
my caution,

And blefs the fortune that conceal'd my weaknefs
For the proud Regent, even from my brother.
My seeming innocence preserves respect,
And gives him life and vigour to pursue
My daring scheme to crush the man I hate.
Shou'd it succeed, secure from all reproach,
Life may be worth my care.

Enter Zenomira.

I had forgot——

This woman knows too much---her lover too——
They may be dangerous--that too shou'd be thought on,
And shall be so hereafter——What's your business?

Zen. Madam, the Regent asks to be admitted.

Q. Why shou'd I be alarm'd?--No, 'tis not fear
That gives this sudden sickness to my heart:——
This tremor, these convulsive starts proceed
From strong aversion only---I condemn him. [*Apart.*
Yes, let him enter. [*Exit Zenomira.*

I'll enjoy his anguish:
Safe in my sex and dignity, I'll tell him,
That 'tis my pride and glory to have made him
The very wretch he is.

Enter

Enter Elmerick and Zenomira.

Zen. Madam, the Regent——

Elm. I've orders, Madam, from your Lord and mine
Fit only for your ear.

Q. What gloomy grandeur he assumes!
What insolent tranquillity he bears!

You may withdraw. *[Exit Zenomira.]*

Elm. I hear, *Conrade* is fled.

Q. You've bad intelligence, the state must suffer
While you're no better serv'd: He scorns to fly,
And will confront you soon.

Elm. 'Till then, let guilt
And fear attend, and keep the villain waking.

Q. You come to rail: Begin, I stand collected,
Nay, will assist you. You refus'd my love,
And in my turn, I have undone *Ismena*.

Elm. You do confess it then?

Q. I glory in it.
To wound you where I knew you most secure,
To taint your Heaven, to curse you in *Ismena*,
Was my contrivance: *Conrade's* desperate passion,
Subservient to my vengeance, wrought her ruin.

Elm. This I had charg'd you with; but, self-con-
victed,
My pains are spar'd, and here your process ends.

[A pause.]

Thou awful power, whose bright tremendous sword
Rules Heaven and Earth, while Hell resists in vain,
Inexorably firm, eternal Justice;
Fearless I offer up this high delinquent
To you and to *Ismena*: Deign t' accept
No common sacrifice, and may it prove

A solemn lesson and a dreadful warning,
T' instruct and to alarm a guilty world.

Q. Dost thou presume, the subject of our throne,
To menace me with justice ?

Elm. You're no Sov'reign,
Your King's authority resides in me.

Q. Not to assassinate his Queen. Help. Treason.
[Calls.

Elm. Cease your vain clamour, and prepare to die ;
I've taken measures not to be prevented.

Q. Traitor, think who I am, respect my rank.

Elm. That you shou'd have respected.
The blackest aggravation of your guilt
Is from your rank, and other benefits
Receiv'd from Heaven : Not to have done much good
With your advantages, forfeits them all,
And leaves you debtor to a vast account ;
But there abuse——

Q. And who shall judge of that ?

Elm. All may, and must, who feel and suffer by it ;
But I've a double right to judge and punish.
The ignominy of a bar and scaffold,
Which our strict laws, and your high crimes demand ;
For the King's honour, here I take upon me
At my own peril to remit, and make
Myself your only judge, and this your scaffold.
If you've not sin'd beyond the hopes of pardon,
But wou'd in pray'r and penitential tears
Employ a few short moments, they are yours——
The utmost of my mercy.

Q. So determin'd !

The King's arrival yet wou'd change our fates. [*Aside.*
Cruel man ! Blame

62 *E L M E R I C K.*

Blame your own scorn for what I've rashly done,
And let us now exchange mutual forgiveness. [*Weeps.*]

Elm. I have not gone thus far without consulting
Reason and Justice, with the extent and end
Of that great Power and Trust impos'd upon me :
No, had the wrong you've basely done my wife,
Been done the meanest peasant's wife in *Hungary*,
Nor rank, nor vain intreaties shou'd protect you.

Q. *Conrade* is gone t' accuse you to the King——
You know how well the strong appearance won
My brother's credit to th' imputed crime ;
My death wou'd be so full a confirmation
Of all I charg'd you with, that certain ruin,
And everlasting infamy, must follow.

Elm. And do you thus atone for your offences ?
Is this the use you make of my indulgence,
To boast new crimes ?

Q. To warn you of your danger.
I tell you once again, you dare not kill me.

Elm. I dare not let you live, for that's injustice,—
The only thing I fear : And had you fear'd it,
You had been safe and happy. Enter now
Ye ministers of justice : Do your office.

*Enter the Executioners. While they prepare to strangle
her, she speaks.*

Q. Is there no help then ? Must I fall his victim ?—
Almighty power, who gav'st me my existence,
And with it strong affections and aversions,
Why hast thou dealt so very hardly with me ?
If you have mercy—— [*They pull her into the Recess
in the back Scene, and strangle her.*]

Elm. O let her life atone for all its errors!——
 Thus I supply the interrupted pray'r
 That death breaks off, and may it find acceptance!
 The fiercest anger in the human mind
 Shou'd reach but to the grave——*Belus.*

Enter Belus.

Bel. My Lord,
 What is your pleasure?

Elm. We must seek the King.

Bel. My Lady's father, and th' assembled Peers—

Elm. 'Tis true, I had forgot. Behold within there.

[Pointing to the Recess in the back Scene.]

Bel. Alas! my Lord!—— *[Seeing the Queen.]*

Elm. At what are you surpriz'd?

Bel. The Queen is dead!

Elm. She is, and by my sentence.

Have I done ought unjust?

Bel. I dare not say it,

Yet stand astonish'd at the rigorous deed.

Elm. So do not I that wickedness abounds,
 When justice is a wonder. Seek the Peers,
 And bring 'em to behold what thou hast seen.

Bel. You wou'd not have this known?

Elm. Not have it known!

The business of my life is to proclaim it. *[Exit Belus.]*

O thou impartial, universal power,
 Wife Nature's eldest law, wrote by herself
 Upon the heart of man, eternal Justice;
 Inspired by thee, with one determin'd blow,
 I have redrest my poor *Ismena's* wrongs,

(As

64 *E L M E R I C K.*

(As far as wrongs like hers can be redress'd)
And wip'd dishonour from my house and name :
And now if I am call'd to be thy martyr,
My race will end with glory.

Enter Bathori and Lords.

Bath. I have declared
To these right noble Lords, as you commanded,
The Queen and *Conrade's* most inhuman guilt.

Elm. Then judge, my Lords, whether this dreadful act

Merits reproach or praise. [*Pointing to the Queen.*

1st Ld. Speak he that can.

2d Ld. Astonishingly bold——

3d Ld. But righteous vengeance :

Unprecedented Justice !

Ba. Yes, this transcends example. Gracious Heaven !
May I but live to see her brother thus !——

1st Ld. Sir, your interest

May make you partial : Not that we condemn
Or justify the Regent : To the King
We must refer his sentence.

Elm. 'Tis but just.

And so may Heaven deal with my soul hereafter,
When I shall stand at that all-seeing bar ;
As I will render up a strict account;
Urge to the King himself his Queen's misdoing,
And seek my judge with his wife's blood upon me.

1st L. Heard you that trumpet ? [*Flourish of trumpets.*

2d Ld. See, the King appears.

Enter

Enter King, Conrade, and Attendants.

K. Where is this Patriot who defies all law,
And uses our authority for treason?

I ask for *Elmerick*.

Elm. Your loyal subject,
The *Palatine* and Regent of your kingdom,
Who bears that name, is here.

K. Doth not the presence of thy King confound thee?

Elm. I burnt with strong impatience 'till I saw him.

K. Where is *Matilda*? Go and call the Queen:
Let her appear, and strike the Traitor dumb.

—What means this gloomy silence? Are you motionless?

Why am I not obey'd?

Elm. I pray, give back——
Behold, unhappy King, to what my Justice
Has brought thy guilty Queen.

K. Heavenly powers!

Matilda! Am I come, though on the wings
Of love, too late to save thee?

[*Runs to the body in the recess.*]

Conr. O my sister!

Are these our promis'd joys? Is this our triumph?

Elm. Suspend the Husband, and exert the King.

K. Inhuman wretch! I will exert the King,
And give new majesty and double terror
To that important name, for thy destruction.

Elm. Sir, I resign my life without reluctance;
Take, if you please, my head. But know, your fame
Is in the balance, and your conduct now
Must fix your character to all posterity;
Must place you in the list of lawless tyrants,

E

Or

Or Kings, whose virtue dignify'd the office,
 And honour'd human nature. If you think
 The abject fear of death, not a regard
 To your yet spotless virtue and renown,
 Inspires my tongue, you've my compassion, Sir.
 Monarchs are men---I've said---and use your pleasure.

K. I thought I knew thee well: hence my amazement
 Is equal to my grief and indignation.
 Had'st thou the tongue of Angels, cou'd'st thou hope
 To clear thyself of my *Matilda's* death?

Elm. Nor was it e'er my purpose to attempt it;
 But I've a right to justify myself
 If innocent, and to be heard with patience.

K. A murderer confess'd dare talk of Justice!
 Thou hast touch'd
 My inmost soul. I'd rather thou shou'dst 'scape,
 Than fix a precedent which may be urged
 Hereafter, to suppress the voice of truth;
 Lose the benignant character of King,
 And change my glories for a tyrant's shame.——
 You shall be heard: A feat——O my *Matilda*,
 Forgive this short delay. Let the rash man,
 Endeavouring to defend, convict himself,
 And fall the more abhorr'd.

Elm. You may remember, Sir,
 When you appointed me your substitute,
 You did pronounce, in presence of your states,
 The worst abuse of law and all just power,
 Is when the great offend and pass unpunish'd.
 This you injoin'd me strongly not to suffer,
 Nor bear the sword in vain. You've been obey'd---
 The Queen transgress'd---and I have done my duty.

K. Your duty, Sir! Dare you affirm the Queen----

Elm. Deserv'd the death I gave her. Hear me out.
If, with deep fore thought and deliberate malice,
To plot and to effect a matron's ruin,
To give her up to a lewd spoiler's rage,
By laws divine and human, be pronounc'd
A crime deserving death, the guilty Queen
Drew on herself the justice I inflicted.
Her wicked agent *Conrade*, her vile brother,
Who stain'd the purity of my *Ismena*,
Is left to prove your justice. [*King rises.*]

K. Can it be!

Thy lovely, chaste *Ismena*!

Elm. She, my wife.

Lovely she was, and chaste; and not less worthy
That just regard the meanest may pretend to,
I trust, for being mine.

Conr. Evasive traitor!

Say for what cause, with impious prophanation,
You dar'd attempt your master's sacred bed;
And I may deign to answer to your charge.

K. Is this the court of *Buda*? This vile stage
Of lewdness, death, and black recrimination?
Of what a sudden growth is rank corruption!
That, during my short absence, hath infected
My house and throne, those I most loved and trusted.
---But bring the clearest proof of this foul charge
Against my Queen and brother, or expect
The self same mercy thou hast shewn to her:
Whom, if thy accusation be unjust,
Thou'st basely murder'd twice.

Elm. I have the strongest proofs,
My wife's accusing tears, who cou'd not forge

To her own ruin and to my dishonour
A tale so full of shame. But more, the Queen,
The Queen herself, triumphant in her malice,
Confest it to my face, and gloried in it.

K. And will *Ismena* vouch it?—I think highly
Of your Wife's truth;—so did I of *Matilda's*—
I'll not condemn her on a single witness:
Ismena is but one, thy word is nothing.

Elm. I have yet farther Proofs. Peruse this scroll,
(*Giving the King a Paper.*)

This full avowal of the hellish deed,
Witness'd by these who both were actors in it,
(*Pointing to Belus and Zenomira.*)

Without designing ill, which I produce
With strong reluctance, as it speaks a weakness
Of the lost Queen, which I wou'd fain conceal.

K. Why shou'd I tremble thus? Let truth appear,
And shame light where it will. (*Reads*)
Madness and death!

Confess a guilty passion for the Regent!——
Can these things be!—That dignity of spirit,
That high demeanour stoop to such dishonour!——
How shall I credit—what I can't reject?
How root out fixt ideas from a heart
Matilda fill'd, and bend it to conviction?——
O *Elmerick*! I see the pois'nous source
Of our united woes.

Elm. Her will refus'd,
She offer'd at her Life——

Conr. This claims attention. (*Aside.*)

Elm. Which while I strove to save, her brother enter'd;
And, by her art deceiv'd, attempted mine:
The rest that paper speaks. *Conr.*

Conr. Too fatal truth!

'Twas gallant in him then not to accuse her.

I see my fate, and am prepar'd to meet it. (*Aside.*)

K. You do acknowledge, and confirm for truth
All that is here contain'd? (*To Bel. and Zen.*)

Both. So Heaven deal with us.

K. 'Tis all too plain: Her lawless love, fierce malice,
Conrade's foul rage, and poor *Ismena's* ruin——
To find her guilty, is to find her hateful:
And I wou'd hate——what once I dearly lov'd.
No blood—but tears, and those too weakly shed,
Must stream o'er thy dishonourable hearse,
Unhappy, false *Matilda*!——But no more.——
I will dismiss this weak unworthy softness.
Let *Elmerick* go weep.——*Ismena's* wrongs
May call forth tears that manhood may be proud of.
To weep *Ismena* is to feel for virtue.

How is it with her sorrows? From this hour
My tenderest care shall be to give them comfort.

Elm. I fear her sorrows ne'er will taste of comfort.
But see, the messenger I sent returns.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. I come, my Lord——

Elm. Be brief: how fares my wife?

Mess. As Angels fare,
With whom she now inhabits. When you sent me,
I found her in the arms of her attendants——
Fainting she seem'd—but when I told my message
She rais'd her head, and lifting up her eyes,
'Till then just clos'd, propitious Heaven! she cried,
Defend this noblest pattern of your justice,
Nor let his matchless love go unrewarded.

Then

Then with an heavenly smile addrest me thus.
 Assure my Lord I die without reluctance.
 My soul, that melts with gratitude, presages
 Unequal'd blessings shall attend him here,
 While I enjoy—and then her speech forsook her,
 And she, without one painful sigh, expir'd.

K. Too sure a testimony hast thou given
 Of thy foul wrongs, *Ismena*——*Elmerick*!——
 Quite speechless and o'erwhelm'd!—her father too!—
 Turn not away—I do not offer comfort——
 I mean but to mourn with you.

Elm. So to die!——
 Her delicately chaste and heavenly soul
 Forsook its earthly temple when prophan'd
 Without the steel or poison's lawless aid——
 And lives the man who wrong'd me in *Ismena*?
 Hear then, O righteous King, my high appeal
 To thee, and to the law of warlike *Hungary*.
 Give me to meet this impious Prince in battle;
 There, in the crowded lists, dread scene of justice,
 There only can I sue for retribution,
 Wrong'd as I am, without a soldier's shame.
 And thou, *Ismena*, from thy fainted seat,
 Where high thou sit'st crown'd with the starry wreaths
 That angels weave for purity like thine,
 Look down propitious on me, and accept
 This high, this second sacrifice of vengeance.

Comr. Then I have murder'd thee, ador'd *Ismena*.
 These mourn thy fate with tears, but what's the sorrow
 That streaming eyes can utter and relieve!
 Though thou disdain'st my grief, yet learn this truth

(turning to *Elmerick*)

From

From him thou most abhor'st :—The innocent
Are not the fittest objects of compassion :
O there's no pain, no misery like guilt——
Nor do I fall thy sacrifice : For know,
Had I been plac'd above the power of vengeance ;
Ismena's fate, th'effect of my rash love,
Had been lamented thus, and thus reveng'd——
(*Stabs himself.*)

K. This is t'atone one error by another.

Conr. Nothing but error : I was born to err :
The willing slave of every youthful passion.
'Tis now too late to learn—my day is past—
'Tis night——*Ismena*——oh—— (Dies.)

Elm. Unerring power! whose deep and secret counsels
No finite mind can fathom and explore ;
It must be just to leave your creatures free,
And wise to suffer what you most abhor :
Supreme and absolute of these your ways
You render no account—We ask for none.
For mercy, truth, and righteous retribution
Attend at length your high and awful throne.
Ismena is aveng'd——Let me be wretched !

K. Our sorrows must be felt. Yet, O! brave *Elmerick*,
Let not the Publick suffer! Thou'st done greatly.
Still hold the Sov'reign Power till I return
From *Jordan's* sacred stream and holy *Sion* ;
My Substitute till then, my Friend for ever.
The face of justice as she shines in Heaven,
In native purity, unclouded splendor,
Alone can charm beyond thy virtuous daring.
That be Thy praise—that I approve it mine.

End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. MILWARD.

YOU, who supreme o'er ev'ry work of Wit,
In Judgment here unaw'd, unbias'd sit,
The Palatines and Guardians of the Pit;
If to your minds this meerly-modern Play,
No useful sense, no gen'rous warmth convey;
If Fustian here, thro' each unnat'ral Scene,
In strain'd conceits sound high, and nothing mean;
If Lofty Dulness for your Vengeance call;
Like Elmerick Judge, and let the Guilty Fall.
But if Simplicity with Force and Fire,
Unlabour'd thoughts and artless words inspire;
If, like the Action which these Scenes relate,
The whole appear irregularly Great;
If master-strokes the nobler Passions move,
Then, like the King, acquit us, and approve.

The E N D.



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